

City Manager's Weekly Report

This is the weekly report for the week ending December 19th, 2008.

1. Meeting Notes

The next regular City Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 6th. During the month of January, the Council will also meet on January 13th (City Council swearing-in), January 20th, and January 27th.

2. City of Richmond Selected by The California Endowment for its Ten Year Strategic Initiative, *Building Healthy Communities*

The City learned this past Friday that it is one of 14 places selected for The California Endowment's (TCE's) strategic initiative of "*Building Healthy Communities* – places where children and youth are healthy, safe and ready to learn." The City joins Central/West Fresno, South Sacramento, Del Norte, City Heights (San Diego), South Figueroa Corridor/Vermont-Manchester (Los Angeles), Boyle Heights, Long Beach, Santa Ana, Coachella, East Salinas, South Merced, East Oakland, and Arvin/Lamont (Kern County) as partners in TCE's effort.

According to information provided by The California Endowment:

This 10-year initiative of *Building Healthy Communities* builds on the wisdom and past experience of all our grantees and partners throughout California. Their work has demonstrated that the economic, physical, social and service environments in which people live have profound and lasting effects on the health of individuals, families and communities. Prevention is the key to meaningful and sustainable health improvement...We selected these underserved communities because they evidence the leadership and capacity to realize the *Building Healthy Communities* vision. And we welcome their partnerships as we begin to plan the 10-year initiative this upcoming year.

In their notification letter to the City of Richmond, TCE outlines four specific long-range health outcomes for their investment:

- Reverse the youth obesity epidemic;
- Ensure all children have access to comprehensive and coordinated health services;
- Improve school attendance;
- Reduce youth violence.

This is an extremely important program in which the City of Richmond has been selected for participation, and builds very effectively on the Community Health and Wellness Element of the City's current General Plan effort. TCE has indicated that they will be contacting their partner cities over the next few months to begin the process of planning together.

More information on this program and The California Endowment is available on their website at:

<http://www.calendow.org/healthycommunities/communities.html>

We will keep you informed as this program moves forward.

3. **Lawsuit Filed Against City in Port/Honda Project**

The City learned on Thursday of this past week that Fred Arm, the appellant on the Port/Honda project approval, has now filed a lawsuit challenging this approval. The suit alleges, among other things, that in approving the project, the City did not fully comply with provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act and the Richmond Municipal Code. The lawsuit is disappointing for a number of reasons, not the least of which is that, even after his appeal was denied, City staff continued to meet with Mr. Arm in an attempt to address his concerns. Needless to say, we believe that the lawsuit is without merit.

4. **LEAP Receives Tour Grant from the San Francisco Foundation**

The San Francisco Foundation has granted Cultural Enhancement Tours and LEAP (the Library's literacy program) funds for a program called **GET ON THE BUS**. On Wednesday, February 4th, LEAP students will board a luxury coach to tour the historical streets of Richmond on their way to The Museum of African American Diaspora (MOAD) in San Francisco. Students will view a special exhibit entitled, I DO IT FOR MY PEOPLE, which focuses on transformation, and project participants will be asked to document their response to this exhibit through photography and written expression. Benece Booker, former volunteer with LEAP, will be in charge of organizing the bus tour through the city, the tour of MOAD, and lunch for the participants.

5. **RichmondBUILD Receives Grant to Train At-Risk Youth and Ex-Offenders**

RichmondBUILD staff applied for and received a grant of \$197,500 from the State of California's Employment Training Panel (ETP) to train at-risk youth, ex-offenders, and adults with barriers to employment. The one year grant is designed to train 53 eligible Richmond residents in construction skills, basic electrical, energy efficiency, solar technology and solar installation. Of the 54 grants awarded state-wide, the RichmondBUILD award was selected as the featured project in ETP's press release, which stated:

Established in 2007, Richmond Build quickly became a model of an effective and broad public/private partnership focused on developing talent and skills in the high wage construction and renewable energy fields...“RWIB's BUILD program is a prime example of a successful workforce development program that supports Governor Schwarzenegger's green technology, at-risk youth/ex-offender, and talent transfer initiatives,” said Brian McMahon, ETP's Executive Director. “ETP is pleased to partner with an organization so committed to meeting its community's job training needs.”

6. **Arts and Culture Update**

- City Councilmembers may have noticed the new art exhibition in the City Council chambers. The artwork features views of Richmond, and was done by members of a newly formed association called Arts of Point Richmond.
- As I previously reported, the “Butterfly Mural” on the 800 block of Macdonald Avenue has been repainted with a new theme featuring the roots of dance in Richmond and the formation of “The Robot” – a dance that began years ago in this city. Original dancers came from the East Coast and Los Angeles to demonstrate their techniques while the artists painted the mural. The following e-mail message was received regarding the dancing activity that took place while the mural was painted:

I'd like to personally thank you for reaching out to Eustinove Smith, our resident NorCal Bay Area Dance Historian Artist in our efforts to preserve and document “Richmond CA Robotting Group Dance Style”. You and your team of artists have allowed natives in our community who helped pioneer a dance style during the 1970's within our city take pride in a visual art that has never been done before (30+ years!). History has truly been made.

- Arts and Culture staff is representing Richmond in a four-city East Bay Cultural Corridor collaboration to feature the arts in the East Bay. An East Bay Cultural Corridor is a likely outcome of the group, to include art studio mapping, on-line ticketing, and an arts calendar. The other three partners are Oakland, Berkeley, and Emeryville. Funding for the collaboration is being provided by several foundation grants.

7. **City Hall Move Schedule Getting Finalized**

Assuming that the furniture deliveries are on time, the projected date for staff and desk contents to move back to the City Hall building is the weekend of March 20, 2009, for about half of the staff, and the following weekend for the remainder. New furniture and phone systems should be installed from mid-February to mid-March, with some files and supplies being moved starting March 16th. The old Hall of Justice building move will take place in June.

The March move includes:

Office of the Mayor	City Manager
City Clerk	Human Resources
City Attorney	Finance
Planning & Building	Engineering
Information Technology	IT Training Room / EOC
Mail Room	Copy Center

The June move includes:

City Council Chamber	City Council Members
LEAP	Redevelopment
Fire Dept. Administration	Confidential Invest. & Appeals Officer
Housing Authority Administration	Art & Culture
Office of Neighborhood Safety	

8. **Meetings of Note During the Past Week**

I attended several meetings of note during the past week, which may be of interest to you:

- Mayor McLaughlin and I, together with the Mayor's staff member Nicole Valentino, met with Oakland Mayor Ron Dellums and two of his staff members in a productive discussion regarding ways in which to identify and implement some joint projects through the East Bay Green Corridor partnership.
- I attended the Southside Plus One improvement group's holiday meeting last Thursday, which was also attended by Mayor McLaughlin and Councilmember Nat Bates. Of particular note, the group's representatives were very complimentary of the many changes to the Booker T. Anderson Community Center implemented by Recreation Coordinator Alicia Nightengale and by Public Works Department staff.

9. **Veolia Personnel Changes**

Chuck Voltz, who has had overall supervision for the City's contract with Veolia Water for the wastewater and storm water programs, is moving on, and will be replaced in January by Philip Ashcroft, who is currently President of Veolia Water North America, West LLC and is working in Massachusetts. I will be meeting with Mr. Ashcroft in early January.

10. **Recreation Highlights**

The following are highlights from the Recreation Department for the past week:

- The 11th Annual Senior Winter Ball was held on Friday, December 12th at the Richmond Convention Center Auditorium, with over 700 guests enjoying the festivities.
- The 56th Annual Snow Ball was held on Saturday, December 13th, at the Richmond Convention Center Auditorium. Final estimates are that 2,000 high school students from the West Contra Costa County Unified School District were in attendance. The ceremonies and festivities were celebrated in a safe and fun manner.
- Breakfast with Santa was held Saturday, December 20th at the Richmond Recreation Complex, with breakfast served at 8:30 and again at 10:30 while Santa mingled with guests.